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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000436

SIPDIS

FOR G/TIP, INL/HSTC, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KCRM SMIG ELAB EAID KU TIP

SUBJECT: FY 2007 ESF PROPOSAL: "PROJECT RESPECT" TO RAISE AWARENESS OF TIP AMONG KUWAITI EMPLOYERS

REF: KUWAIT 262

1. Embassy Kuwait requests ESF funding for an anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) campaign targeted primarily at increasing protection for East and South Asian workers, the most vulnerable labor communities in Kuwait. Project RESPECT (Reaching Employers and Sponsors to Prevent and End Crimes of Trafficking) would increase public awareness of trafficking and labor exploitation in Kuwait, a destination country, and also inform employers of their responsibilities and obligations under Kuwaiti law. The principal objective of the program is prevention, though it will touch on prosecution as well.

2. There is a justified need for an anti-trafficking campaign in Kuwait. Kuwait was designated a tier 3 country in the 2005 Trafficking in Persons report. Since the report's release, the GOK has made efforts to protect workers, sanction those who exploit the expatriate labor population, and strengthen the implementation of existing laws as well as adopt new ones. Despite Government and media attention to the issue, there remains a large population that is ignorant of the plight of expatriate workers.

3. During Post's regular bilateral meetings and roundtable discussions (ref A), source country Labor Officers gave unanimous support to projects aimed at increasing the awareness of Kuwaiti employers to the rights of their employees. While the Kuwaiti Government has made official advances to improve the situation of domestic workers, much of the labor abuse that occurs in Kuwait is in the domestic sector, where employers can act with impunity behind closed doors. It is therefore essential to change Kuwaiti employers' ideas about the acceptable treatment of their employees who represent the largest portion of the workforce.

4. Project RESPECT would finance the production and dissemination of several short public service announcements (PSAs) highlighting the problem of labor exploitation in Kuwait. The PSAs would run in movie theaters before the featured film. The PSAs would thereby gain widespread exposure since Kuwait has 14 operating cinemas (an additional six are under construction), with a total of over 30,000 seats. Kuwaiti theaters sell millions of tickets each year. RESPECT is a new program, however, it would maintain the momentum of Project FALCon, an FY 2006 program administered by Post to educate the resident expatriate work force and raise awareness among potential trafficking victims.

5. Post would contract with CineMagic (<http://www.cinemagics.tv>), a local production agency, to produce the spots in both English and Arabic. CineMagic was an FY2005 recipient of a Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) small grant to train underprivileged Kuwaiti youth in film production. The students have not only developed a skill, but learned about the importance of teamwork and community involvement as they wrote, directed, filmed, and produced PSAs on social and health issues. Ideally, graduates of the program would play a key role in Project RESPECT thereby addressing a TIP issue and also contributing to the Freedom Agenda. Post would also be involved in the production process to insure that the content reflected the appropriate message. Post and CineMagic would also coordinate with the Kuwait National Cinema Company (<http://www.kncc.com>) to have the spots aired. Post will maintain a low public profile in order to ensure that the public face of Project RESPECT remains Kuwaiti.

6. Project evaluation would consist of contacting the embassies of source countries in Kuwait to monitor any decrease in reports of trafficking or abuse. Post will further monitor the project's effectiveness by seeking the same information from Kuwaiti ministries, police, and courts. Post will conduct an informal assessment by monitoring SMS traffic and web logs (blogs), popular vehicles for disseminating information and sharing opinions. Post will review progress after one month of project implementation and every three months thereafter. Since statistics from Kuwaiti ministries or origin country embassies may not be accurate or shared fully with Post, it may not be possible to measure project performance precisely although Post anticipates an initial uptick in reports of trafficking and abuse, and a decrease in the number of domestics seeking shelter at their

embassies as the working population and their employers become more informed. Embassy contact, poloff Mark Rosenshield (RosenshieldMS@state.gov), will follow up with these organizations.

17. The estimated cost for Project RESPECT is \$100,000. Production of five PSAs would cost \$80,000, with approximately 20% of the cost for pre-production, 60% for production, and 20% for post-production. Outputting the PSAs onto film for distribution, in addition to DVD and streaming formats, would cost \$20,000. Post would cooperate with the Government of Kuwait to secure screen time for the announcements at popular movie theaters. There are no other proposed funding donors aside from ESF.

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